

REMARKS

Please reconsider the rejections of the claims in light of the following arguments and allow the pending claims.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the personal interview granted on July 9, 2003. As discussed during the interview, Applicants have amended claims 1, 12-14, and 22 and have canceled claims 23 and 24, in order to set forth that the present apparatus and method utilizes a series of chilled rollers (or conveying rollers) consisting essentially of a first chilled roller and a second chilled roller, the second chilled roller being positioned so that the extruded continuous filaments flow from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller. As explained more fully below, the aspects of employing only two chilled conveying rollers in a sequential vertical position along with the canted angle approach to the first in the series of rollers are not disclosed by Canadian Patent No. 2248575 ("Can. '575") and PCT WO 92/16366 ("PCT '366"), which are the references cited by the Examiner.

Applicants have also amended independent claim 16 to include the limitation of wherein at least one of the two conveying rollers is chilled. Applicants have also amended claim 17, which depends from independent claim 16, to include the limitation that each of the two conveying rollers is chilled.

The amendments to claims 1, 12-14, 17 and 22 do not add new matter. Specifically, the present application discloses on page 13, lines 14-17 that "in another embodiment, only two chilled rollers may be needed before the continuous filaments are supplied to the laminator portion of the system which bonds the spunbond facing(s) to the continuous filaments in the roller nip." Figure 17 of the present application also

provides additional support for this amendment and depicts a lamination system employing only two conveying rollers below the extruder.

The amendments to claim 16 do not add new matter. For example, the present application discloses on page 4, lines 20-24, that one or more of the rollers may be chilled so as to simultaneously quench the continuous filaments as they are being stretched.

Applicants have also added new independent claim 30 that includes the limitation that the series of chilled rollers is enclosed within a sealed tower structure that provides conditioned air to the enclosed chilled rollers. The limitation included in new claim 30 does not add new matter. For example, the present application discloses on page 14, lines 6-9 that "the series of rollers (or roller) may be enclosed within a sealed tower structure and conditioned air, with the moisture removed, may be utilized in order to control the chilling effects of the rollers."

The Examiner had rejected claims 1-4 and 6-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over a combination of Can. '575 and PCT '366. Neither reference alone, nor the references in combination, teach or suggest the use of only two conveying rollers wherein both are chilled and wherein the first conveying roller is vertically positioned relative to the second conveying roller to allow for the extruded continuous filaments flow as now claimed in independent claims 1 and 22. Likewise, neither reference alone, nor the references in combination, teach or suggest the use of only two sequential, vertically-arranged conveying rollers wherein at least one of the conveying rollers is chilled as now claimed in independent claim 16.

Instead, Can. '575 uses more than two chilled rollers in Figure 10. PCT '366 employs two chilled rollers in Figure 3 that are not positioned so that the extruded continuous filaments flow from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller. There is simply no teaching or suggestion in Can. '575 or PCT '366 of only two chilled rollers and that the second chilled roller is positioned so that the extruded continuous filaments flow from the first chilled roller to the second chilled roller, as claimed by the Applicants. In addition, the references together do not show this aspect and arrangement of the rollers relative to the continuous filament flow.

With regard to claim 16, Can. '575 discloses more than two conveying rollers and PCT '366 discloses two conveying rollers in Figure 3 that are not positioned so that the extruded continuous filaments flow from the first conveying roller to the second conveying roller.

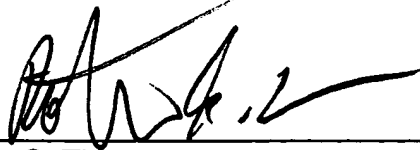
With regard to the new independent claim 30, both Can. '575 and PCT '366 fail to teach or suggest that a series of chilled rollers may be enclosed within a sealed tower structure that provides conditioned air.

In sum, in view of the foregoing arguments, we respectfully submit that the rejected claims are patentably distinct over the references cited by the Examiner and meet all other statutory requirements. We believe that the present Application is now in complete condition for allowance and, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections in the Office Action and allow this Application.

We invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned should any issues remain after the consideration of this response. Please charge any additional fees that may be required to Deposit Account No. 50-2548.

Respectfully requested,

NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. S. Thomas', is written over a horizontal line.

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Date

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